What is the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)?

The MASH is the single point of contact for all safeguarding concerns regarding children and young people in West Sussex, which includes front door access for Early Help. It is based at Horsham and the access to the MASH is restricted to only staff from each agency that work directly within the MASH.

It brings together expert professionals, from services that have contact with children, young people and families, and makes the best possible use of their combined knowledge and resources to keep children safe from harm and promote these and their family’s wellbeing.

The MASH does this by:
- Acting as a ‘front door’ to manage and make decisions on all safeguarding concerns
- Holding professional consultations
- Researching information held on professional databases to inform decisions
- Continuing to provide support to professionals working in Early Help. Especially identifying families who need key working services, and family network responses
- Providing a secure and confidential environment for professionals from different agencies to share information
- Identifying low level repeat referrals which taken in isolation may not appear concerning, but do when the child’s journey is reviewed
- Challenging referrers when poor quality referrals are received
- Accessing quickly and efficiently the child protection investigation staff both within children’s social care, the Police and Health (holding strategy discussions centrally) – convening and chairing urgent strategy discussions for children alongside Police, Health, Worth and our other partner agencies within the MASH.

Outcomes of the MASH

- A faster, more co-ordinated and consistent response to safeguarding concerns
- An improved ‘journey’ for the child.
- There is greater emphasis on early help and better informed services. This delivers intervention at the right time
- A clearer process for the professional or member of the public raising a concern
- Closer partnership working, clear accountability and improved multi-agency communications
- A reduction in the number of inappropriate referrals and re-referrals
**How is information shared between agencies and under which legislation?**

*Section 10 of the Children Act 2004* identifies a duty on key people and bodies to cooperate to improve the wellbeing of children and young people. This includes the proportionate sharing of information, where appropriate, to make the best decisions for children and young people at risk. Furthermore a joint letter from four Government departments to all Local Authority Chief Executives and local safeguarding leads in March 2015 stated that their Secretaries of State were “clear on the need for genuinely integrated multi-agency approaches to underpin information sharing ... every agency should commit to this approach.”

- All partners have signed up to an Information Sharing Agreement that specifies what data can be shared within the MASH, and what happens to that data once the MASH manager makes a decision about the case.
- Each agency will assess whether it is appropriate for their information to be shared in line with the Information Sharing Agreement on a case-by-case basis.
- The data is held securely and confidentially. The MASH has physical, electronic and managerial safeguards to ensure that sensitive information is only accessed by those who ‘need to know’ about it.
- Only appropriate and relevant parts of the information disclosed during the MASH process will be passed to the non-MASH professionals receiving the case.

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**Referring to the MASH**

*In the case of a Child Protection concern or professional worry, no consent for referral is required.*

- Request for support e-Form: Click [here](#)
- Email: [MASH@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@westsussex.gov.uk)
- Telephone: 01403 229 900
- Out of Hours: 0330 222 6664
**Key contacts**

- **MASH Group Manager**: Katrina Ugur; [Katrina.Ugur@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Katrina.Ugur@westsussex.gov.uk)
  (Job share with Georgina Dowie. Katrina’s working hours are Mon – 9-5, Tues 9-5, Wed 8.30-1)
- **MASH Group Manager**: Georgina Dowie; [Georgina.Dowie@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Georgina.Dowie@westsussex.gov.uk)
  Georgina’s hours are Wed-1-5, Thurs-9-5, Fri-9-5)
- **MASH Service Lead**: Clare Poyner email: [Clare.Poyner@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Clare.Poyner@westsussex.gov.uk)